



**European Union**  
Delegation of the European Commission  
in South Africa

**... this week  
in review**

*This publication seeks  
to provide information  
on EU activities of  
interest to SA readers.*



**18- 24 June 2007**

#### **Headline News**

##### **European Council reaches successful outcome (23/6)**

The German Council Presidency completed a mammoth task in Brussels: after almost 36 hours of negotiations, it paved the way for treaty reform in the EU. An intergovernmental conference will now draw up the new treaty in detail. "We have achieved what we set out to do", said Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel following the conclusion of the talks on Saturday morning. Europe, she said, had broken the deadlock; the new mandate was a "community effort".

##### **Presidency conclusions**

##### **European Council 21 and 22 June: President Pöttering sets out Parliament's position (21/6)**

EU leaders met in Brussels for a crucial summit on the Constitution. The Constitution was originally intended to come into force in November 2006 but "no" votes in referenda in France and the Netherlands in mid-2005 and the doubts of other countries about ratification put the ratification process on hold. The President of the European Parliament delivered a message at the start of the summit calling for more democracy and transparency and warned that failure to get an agreement among Member States on a revised treaty would lead to a "major crisis: "The EU cannot operate efficiently with the current instruments...it needs to function in a globalised world, to assert its role at an international level and to meet efficiently the concerns of the citizens."

##### **Doha trade talks: Potsdam G4 meeting ends with no agreement (21/6)**

WTO Doha trade negotiations between Brazil, India, the US and the EU ended in Potsdam on June 21, with negotiators unable to close key gaps between them, especially on the important issue of tariff cuts for industrial goods from the large emerging economies. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said the stalemate "placed a major question mark" over the possibility of a successful conclusion to the Doha Round. He said the flexibility shown by the EU had not been matched by others: "It emerged from the discussion on (industrial goods) that we would not be able to point to any substantive or commercially meaningful changes in the tariffs of the emerging economies as a reasonable return on what we are paying into the round". Mandelson said that the EU remained committed to a successful outcome and said that the failure to reach agreement in Potsdam "does not in itself mean that the negotiations cannot be put back on track".

##### **SADC - EU EPA Seminar and Negotiations - opening statement by the Head of Delegation to Namibia (20/6)**

Opening the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) seminar in Namibia, Ambassador Dr Elisabeth Pape said: "One of the objectives of the EPA is to foster the smooth and gradual integration of the ACP states into the world economy. Article 34 of Cotonou makes it clear that such integration will take place in accordance to the political choices and development priorities of the ACP States, and that economic and trade cooperation should contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication. The European Commission attaches particular importance to ensuring, that with financial support if required, countries within the SADC region are equipped with the proper resources and capacity to participate actively in the negotiations". Following the seminar, a new round of EPA negotiations between the EU and the EPA SADC group of countries took place in Walvis Bay and allowed further progress towards the conclusion of an Agreement.

#### **Other News**

##### **New EU market access strategy adopted (20/6)**

The European Council, currently chaired by Germany, has approved the European Union's new market access strategy. The goal is to improve market access for European and German companies in third countries. German Minister of Economics and Technology Michael Glos welcomed the new strategy: "The point is for the European Union, the Member States, and the firms operating in third countries to combine their strengths and improve market access for companies from Europe. It is the

multitude of different and continually new non-tariff trade barriers that make life hard for our export sector. With the new market access strategy, we can effectively deal with these trade barriers."

#### **European Parliament Report calls for sharing of "burden" of immigration (21/6)**

In recognition of UN World Refugee Day on 20 June, MEPs looked at the plight of the increasing numbers of immigrants and asylum seekers to the EU. A report, drafted by Hubert Pirker of the European People's Party and European Democrats, called on EU members to share the burden of refugees and to adopt single procedures that will help speed up dealing with immigration problems. With more and more people arriving in boats on Europe's shores, the situation is urgent.

#### **MEPs debate the situation in the Middle East (19/6)**

Following the recent deterioration and violence in Gaza, European Parliament MEPs turned their attention to the situation in the Middle East. MEPs expressed diverse views with many condemning the violence in the Gaza strip. The House will vote on a resolution during the July Strasbourg plenary (9-12 July). European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pöttering said: "We have all been profoundly moved and disturbed by the terrible situation and frightening developments over the past days in the Gaza Strip. Israelis and Palestinians have the same dignity. The European Parliament, as the representatives of the peoples of Europe, must in a committed and responsible manner support a policy of reconciliation and understanding, even if that may seem very far away from us today."

#### **European Commission welcomes results of CITES conference (18/6)**

The Commission welcomed last Friday's successful outcome of the first ever Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to take place in the European Union. The 3-15 June Conference in The Hague reached an historic solution on the ivory issue after 18 years of controversial debate. In line with the commitments made by the EU, the Commission adopted an action plan on 13 June on CITES enforcement. Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "It shows that with collaboration between all countries, CITES can be the most effective international tool for the conservation of this species".

#### **MEPs urge adoption of a legal framework to combat racism and xenophobia (21/6)**

The European Parliament adopted a report on taking effective action on racism and xenophobia in all Member States, aimed at ensuring that they impose harmonised criminal sanctions -from one to three years of prison- to any public incitement to violence and hatred against persons of a different race, colour, religion, national or ethnic descent, dissemination of writings with such content, public approval, denial or gross trivialisation of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

#### **European Day against the Death Penalty (20/6)**

The Commission has proposed a draft Joint Declaration to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, to be adopted together with the Council of Europe, regarding the establishment of a European Day against the Death Penalty, on 10 October of each year. Franco Frattini, Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, stated that: "The death penalty is a violation of the most fundamental of human rights, namely the right to life. Nothing justifies the death penalty, whether it is considered effective in combating crime or not".

#### **13th ACP-EU session in Wiesbaden (18/6)**

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) holds its 13th session from 23 to 28 June in Wiesbaden, Germany. On the agenda will be the Economic Partnership Agreement between the two groups of countries, as well as the situations in Darfur and Zimbabwe. The JPA brings together Members of the European Parliament and MPs from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states which have signed the Cotonou Agreement that governs EU relations with the ACP for a 20-year period.

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